

The State of the Software

Yaron Koren

Spring 2010 SMWCon
May 22, 2010

What is Semantic MediaWiki?

A convergent, real-time, critical-path solution for seamless, customer-facing synergy.

What is Semantic MediaWiki, really?

It's different things to different people:

- an extension to MediaWiki that allows for better management of wiki pages
- a knowledge-management application
- a research project on the abilities of semantic wikis
- a semantic-web publishing platform
- a project to turn Wikipedia into a queriable database

For that reason, it's interesting to many groups of people:

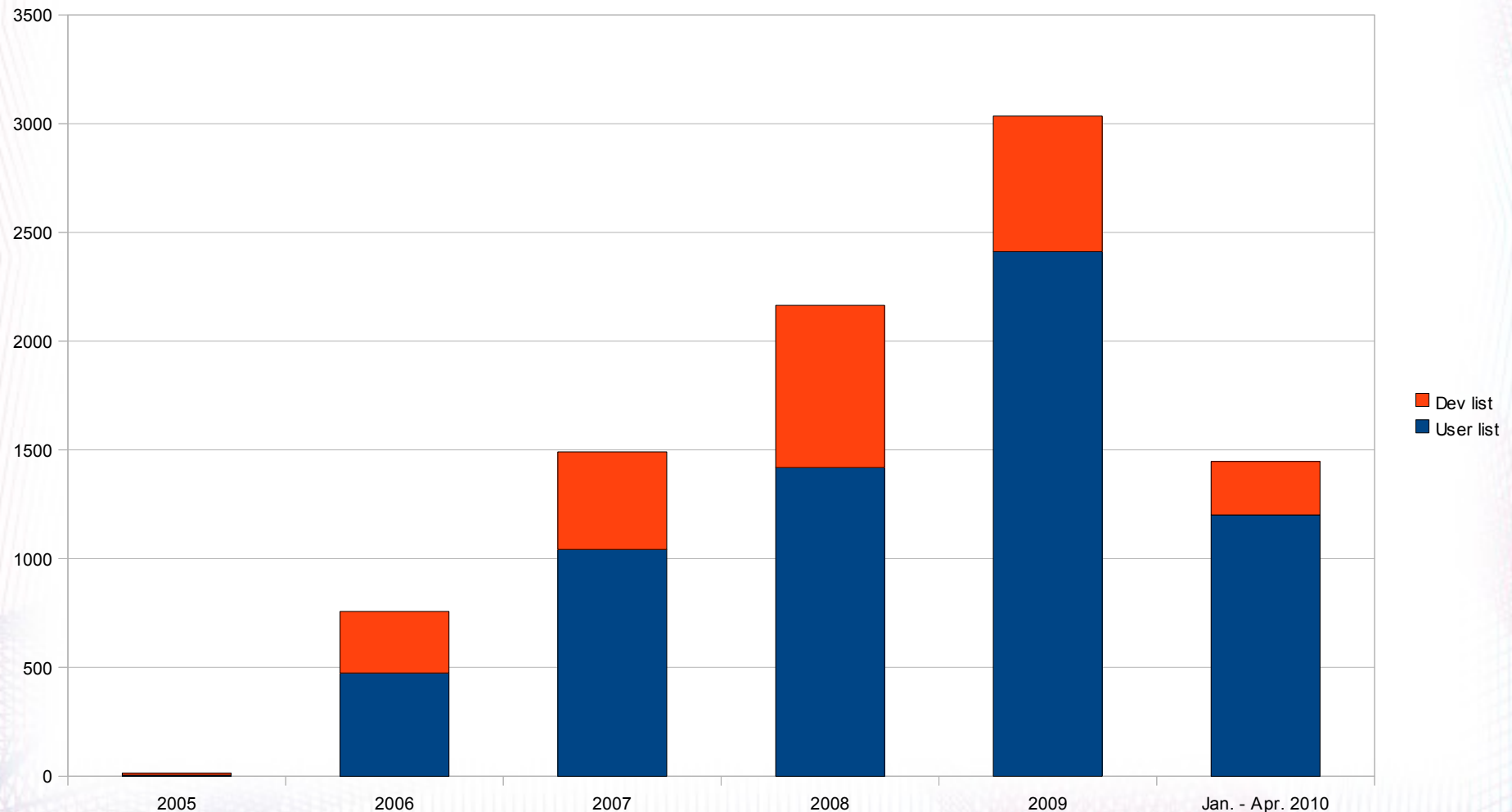
Hackers, academics, corporations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, standalone wiki administrators

Each has their own needs, which together help to define the SMW “ecosystem”.

Semantic MediaWiki is growing in popularity

Any quantifiable way to measure this?

Emails sent to SMW user (blue) and developer (red) mailing lists per year, 2005 – end of April 2010 (Top line is 3500)



New extensions still being created

New extensions in the last six months:

- Rule Knowledge
- Collaboration extension
- Halo Access Control
- SMW OntologyEditor
- SparqlExtension

Number of wikis is growing

Currently 176 active, public SMW-based wikis listed on smw.referata.com.

Consulting is growing

Currently 5-10 individuals, and 5-10 companies,
provide support for Semantic MediaWiki

Including (shameless plug):

WikiWorks
MediaWiki consulting 

Also including others,
some of whom are here today.

Key challenges

In my opinion:

#1: Visibility

#2: Communication

#3: Funding

#1: Visibility

Very few people have heard about semantic wikis,
let alone Semantic MediaWiki

Three press articles (*The Economist*, *iX*, *Linux Magazine*) in five years?

Some high school football games get more
coverage than that!



Goal for 2010:

Get another article written about us?

#2: Communication

Development groups often create SMW-based extensions without notifying others ahead of time
– can lead to duplicated effort.

Duplication can be good – different alternatives can be useful to different people.

Also, it's often easier to design and write code from scratch than to figure out someone else's code.

However – it can also lead to a lot of wasted effort, and half-completed extensions that are never used.

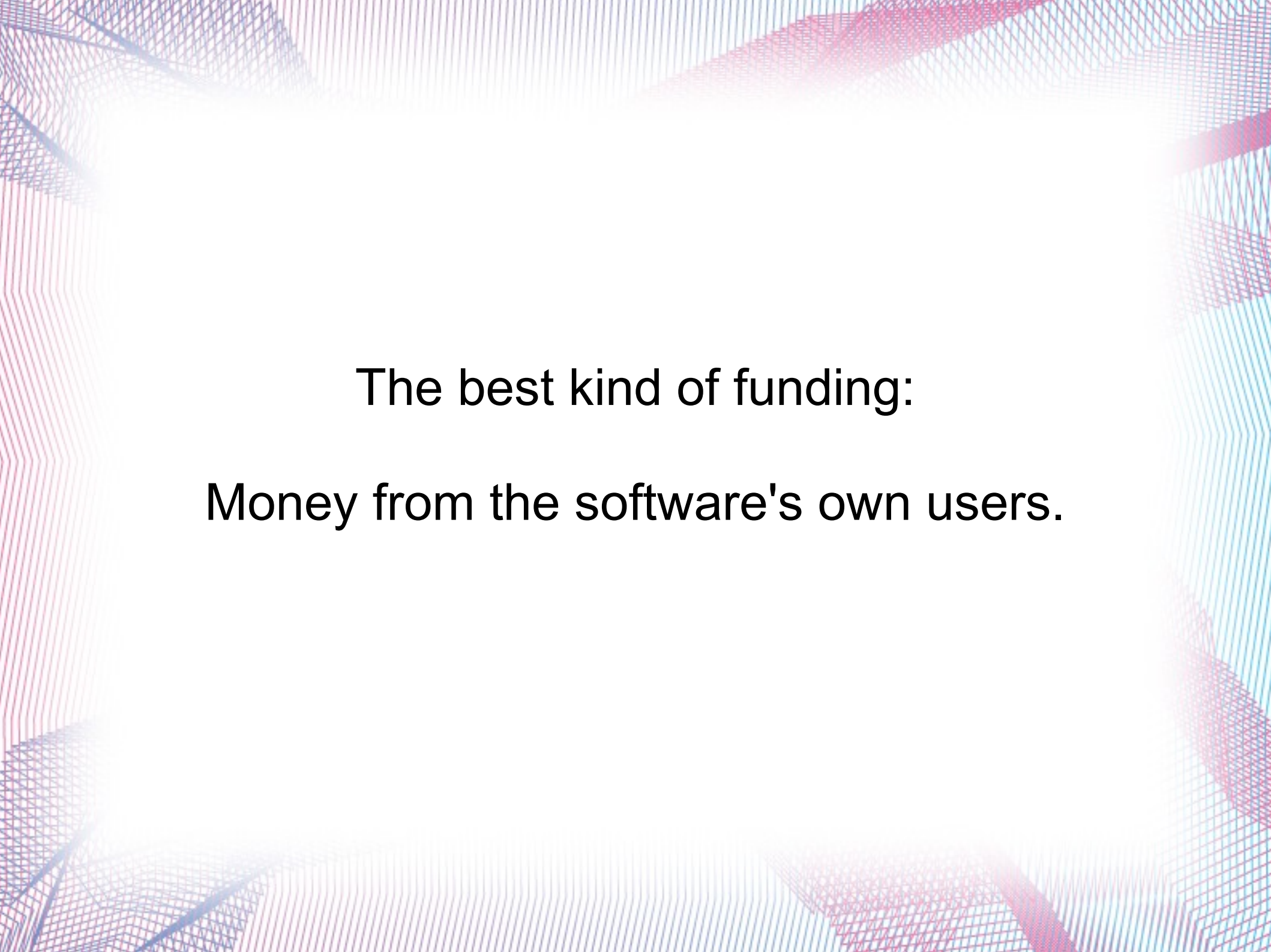
**More open communication would be
helpful – IRC, mailing lists,
conferences**

#3: Funding

More money is generally good.

Sometimes too much money can hurt a project,
though...

Case in point: several other wiki and semantic wiki
applications – lots of money, few (or no) users.



The best kind of funding:
Money from the software's own users.